



Student: **Michael Higley-Vance**

THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETELY FILLED IN

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Save a copy of your assignments: You may need to re-submit an assignment at your instructor's request. Make sure you save your files in accessible location.

Academic integrity: All work submitted in each course must be your own original work. This includes all assignments, exams, term papers, and other projects required by your instructor. Knowingly submitting another person's work as your own, without properly citing the source of the work, is considered plagiarism. This will result in an unsatisfactory grade for the work submitted or for the entire course. It may also result in academic dismissal from the University.

EDU7702-8

Dr. Mark Kelso

Online Learning Communities

Activity #5: Exploratory Methods

Comments:

Faculty Use Only

<Faculty comments here>

[Hi Michael,](#)

[Outstanding work. Very well written and presented. You present some very credible observations. The purpose of this paper was to discuss observational methods which are often involved in qualitative research. I did observe one instance of over usage of source, so please](#)

keep that in mind. This assignment is valuable in that you are exposed to qualitative research methods, which could become very important to you in later studies. NCU highly recommends that all EDD's utilize a case study. Of course you do not have to do that and given your research topic a quantitative research method might be easier. I see no reason to deduct points, so your score is 10 points. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Mark

On a side note, when I looked up your degree plan I saw that you are from Clarksville, TN. I was stationed at Ft. Campbell many years ago and we used to have a great time hanging out in Clarksville.

<Faculty Name>Kelso <Grade Earned>10.0 <Writing Score>3.0 <Date Graded>5/30/14

Exploratory Methods

Qualitative research is a method of study practiced by many academic disciplines.

Qualitative researchers typically aim to study complex human phenomenon and collect detailed information on a small population or group (Cozby, 2009). According to Leedy and Ormrod (2010) there are four purposes for qualitative research:

- The first purpose is to reveal the nature of certain phenomenon related to people, situations, or process and accurately describe it.
- The second purpose is interpretation of a particular phenomenon, theoretical perspective, or discovering new problems within a phenomenon.
- The third purpose allows researchers to test or verify the validity of a phenomenon.
- The fourth purpose provides a process for researchers to evaluate the effectiveness of particular policies, practices, or innovations within a phenomenon.

Generally, the process of data collection in qualitative studies requires an extensive amount of time because of the data collected and how it is analyzed (Cozby, 2009).

Case Studies

Q6 What is a case study?

A case study is defined as “a description of an individual” (Cozby, 2009, p. 115) or setting, which is studied “in-depth for a defined period of time” (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010, p. 137). Case studies require the researcher to record the phenomenon and the context in which it is being observed (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010; Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). According to Trochim and Donnelly (2008) the phenomenon studied can be “of a specific individual or specific context” (p. 147). Case studies are considered extremely useful in apprising researchers of rare and unusual phenomenon, which create the possibility of the development of hypothesis that can

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Comment [1]: Given your degree plan, this type of research method is recommended by NCU.

be tested using other research methods (Cozby, 2009). A case study is merely one method out of many that are common in qualitative measurement and data collection (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). Case studies typically involve the collection of extensive amounts of data (Creswell, 2009; Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). A researcher often uses direct observations of phenomenon as a data collection method but is not essential to a case study (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010; Meltzoff, 2004). Case studies allow researchers the flexibility to study a single case phenomenon or two or more cases in order to make comparisons between the two (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). Each case study is unique because they are based on the observations of individual human behaviors (Cozby, 2009) and may be conducted using a variety of methods (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). Researchers overwhelmingly agree that case studies are best used to document in-depth human behaviors regarding traits, habits, and interactions of people. Additionally, case studies are used to observe, evaluate, and describe programs or settings.

When are case studies used?

Case studies are used in situations where there is a need to develop or improve on theory (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). Trochim and Donnelly (2008) reported examples of researchers who have conducted case studies as the basis for new theory or to study child development. Typically case studies are used where knowledge or understanding of a phenomenon is minimal or non-existent (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). Leedy and Ormrod (2010) report that case studies are useful in studying behavioral changes in people or programs over time. Case studies are designed to record an extensive amount of information about human phenomenon (Creswell, 2009; Leedy & Ormrod, 2010) resulting in a comprehensive account of behaviors studied than any other research methodology (Meltzoff, 2004).

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Comment [2]: I rarely see a student who utilizes a case study method use direct observations. Semi-structured interviews and open ended questionnaires work best.

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Comment [3]: Not all of the time.

Naturalistic observations, a variation of a case study, are descriptions of human behavior made by practitioners closely connected to the environment or situation being studied (Cozby, 2009). This could include a psychologist observing a patient or teacher recording authentic student performance outcomes for the purpose of a research study (Trochim & Donnelly, 2006).

Ke (2010) used a naturalistic case study approach to document instructional practices of online instructors and the learning experiences of online learners. Ke used learner interviews, product analysis, content analysis, and survey tools to collect data needed for the study. These methods of data collection are consistent with a multi-technique approach often used in case studies (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). Ke (2010) found that “an effective teaching presence with supportive features to reinforce the emerging of cognitive and social presence in an online learning environment” (p. 818) is important for creating an engaging atmosphere. He also found that instructors who “demonstrated high presence online” (p. 818) were essential to student learning satisfaction online. [Try not to “over utilize” source material.](#)

What is a psychobiography?

Psychobiography is a type of case study that uses psychological theory and analysis to “explain the life of an individual”, usually regarding historical figures (Cozby, 2009, p. 115). According to Ponterotto (2014) a psychobiography is the “psychological study of an individual person [or] biography that makes use of psychological theory and knowledge” (p. 78). In many cases it is a very personal endeavor for researchers to conduct psychobiographies (Ponterotto, 2014). Typically a “psychobiographer is drawn” (p. 82) or connected to his or her historical figure in some way (Ponterotto, 2014). A method for psychobiographical data collection, regarding historical figures, may include a library search in which no actual observations of the

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historical figure are conducted or interviews with people who may have had a close relationship with the subject (Cozby, 2009; Ponterotto, 2014).

Archival Research

Q7 What is archival research?

An archive is a method of collecting and storing important documents and artifacts.

Archival research consists of researching artifacts such as newspaper entries, legal documents, eyewitness accounts, and relevant objects (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). According to Cozby (2009) archival research “involves using previously compiled information to answer research questions” (p. 116). Leedy and Ormrod (2010) discuss archival research as an “effort to find firsthand accounts and artifacts of an event” (p. 165). Archival data can include primary resources, such as personal letters, diary entries, photographs, film, paintings, census reports, and civil records (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). Researchers who conduct archival research do not actually collect new data but instead study existing data such as census reports and civil records (Cozby, 2009).

Documents, which can be located through archival research, can provide a depth of information in support or opposition of research data collected through alternative means or methods (Trochim & Donnelly, 2006).

What are the major sources of archival data?

Archival data can be found almost anywhere that information is collected (Community Tool Box, 2013). A collection of any artifact, or combination thereof, constitutes an archive (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). The most utilized archives in research are statistical records, archives of surveys, and written records (Cozby, 2009). According to Cozby (2009) statistical records are collected and maintained by many public and private establishments such as the U.S. Census Bureau, local and state health agencies, and educational institutions. Survey archives consist of

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Comment [5]: I had one student use this method. Worked great but hard to find the data you need.

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Comment [6]: Excellent inclusion of source material.

data reported through personal or public surveys, which are often stored on computers and readily available to researchers (Cozby, 2009; Cresswell, 2009). Written records are documents or artifacts that have been preserved by historical institutions such as cultural organizations and local libraries (Cozby, 2009). Additionally, archival data can be challenging to access because records may be difficult to locate or validate (Cozby, 2009). Many organizations, over the course of time, have collected such a large extent of information that they must store their collections off-site or with data storage facilities (Community Tool Box, 2013). [Outstanding content.](#)

Content Analysis

What is [content analysis](#)?

Content analysis is the systematic study of existing documents or artifacts (Cozby, 2009; Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). According to Leedy and Ormrod (2010) content analysis is a detailed examination of a particular body of material such as works of art for the purpose of identifying patterns and themes within that artifact or medium. According to Trochim and Donnelly (2008) the analysis can be quantitative or qualitative, or both. Content analysis requires researchers to [devise systems](#) that can be used to measure and depict the information being collected and studied (Cozby, 2009). Content analysis typically consists of three types of analysis: (a) thematic analysis of text, (b) indexing, and (c) quantitative descriptive analysis (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). Additionally, four steps have been developed to ensure researchers take an objective approach to analyzing the content, those steps include:

- criterion for inclusion or exclusion of a specific body of material from the study, along with an appropriate sample size;
- criterion is defined regarding the characteristics of a specific body of material;

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Comment [7]: Very common method for case studies.

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Comment [8]: Most students will use content analysis software.

- a specific body of material, if required, is organized into manageable segments to be analyzed individually; [and](#)
- and the specific body of material is examined, judged, and compiled according to the criterion above (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010).

Conclusion

Qualitative research is a largely complex area of research methodology studying human phenomenon (Cozby, 2009; Trochim & Donnelly, 2006). Qualitative research can be conducted in a variety of ways and provides researchers with the ability to conduct observations and collect information on human behaviors, settings, or context as with case studies. Psychobiography is one qualitative research method, which can provide insight on the behaviors and study of historical figures. Additionally, qualitative research can be aided through the use of archival research, which can include retrieval of existing data informing on patterns and themes of developing theory. Qualitative research takes a great deal of preparation, organization, and time; however, qualitative research can aid in informing on best practices and developing theory. [Well done! Please see my comments in your reference list.](#)

Reference

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Comment [9]: Also not a GS favorite.

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Comment [10]: Use these sources now, but I highly recommend that you do not use these when you start your DIS courses. GS hates these sources as I have mentioned before.